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UNCLAS HARARE 000973

SIPDIS

AF/PD FOR COX AND ROBERTSON, AF/S FOR KRAFT AND
SCHLACHTER, AF/RA, INR/R/MR, NSC FOR JENDAYI FRAZER

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION MEP; HARARE

1. Under headline "Israeli attacks on civilians abhorrent," the government-controlled daily "The Herald" dedicated its April 23 editorial to calling for the cessation of the "cycle of violence and counter-violence" in the Middle East. Excerpts:

2. ". . . No rational person can condone or support the random killings of Israeli civilians by suicide bombers. These are acts of terrorism. But the Israeli solution, an attack on the civilians of Palestine, cannot, for the same reasons, be condoned or supported. And, looking at how effective the action launched three weeks ago will be, we doubt that there will be any let up in the counter-terror attacks on Israeli civilians. Indeed, we expect there will be more such attacks. There is an urgent need to end this cycle of violence and counter-violence. Israel's incredibly powerful war machine can obviously send troops anywhere in the occupied territories and can destroy whatever it wishes, and kill whomever it targets. But it cannot destroy or kill the desire of the Palestinians for a state of their own, especially when such a state appears to be the only way they can live a normal life.

". . . We believe that peace can come to Israel and Palestine. But, as in Northern Ireland, South Africa and other places where dispute centered on religious and ethnic grounds, tremendous moral leadership must be exerted by the religious leaders. Jewish rabbis the world over need to take a stand on principle, and tell the Israeli government that it cannot betray the core beliefs and tribulations that led to the establishment of Israel in the first place. Palestinian imams and bishops have to explain that sometimes forgiveness is the only option God gives us. There is still a chance that what is needed - two states, alike in dignity and living together in peace - can be achieved. But that needs men and women of highest moral courage to stand up for peace and honor for all."

WHITEHEAD